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ABSTRACT

Values are the evaluative and judgmental facet of a culture's "personal orientation system," helping its members determine what is right or wrong, good or bad, important or unimportant. However, the values which are of primary importance to citizens of a particular country may be of only secondary or tertiary importance to citizens of another country, a difference which can lead to problems in international communication. A comparison study demonstrated this problem by examining the differences in values held by Americans and Japanese. A survey was administered to 230 students at Nihon and Otsuma Women's University in Japan and to a similar number at West Virginia University. The students were asked to rate 42 values as being of primary (i.e., worth dying for) secondary, or tertiary value, or of no value. Results showed that the American students attached primary value to independence, individuality, human dignity, democracy, and loyalty, while the Japanese felt only peace was of primary value. Some of the values Americans felt were of secondary importance include hospitality, firstness, aggressiveness, and money, while the Japanese listed independence, individuality, hospitality, and democracy as being of secondary importance. Differences such as these need to be taken into account during intercultural exchanges, and representatives of each culture should make an effort to understand the other's values to avoid hostility and communication breakdowns. (Eighteen references are included.) (JC)

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HUMAN VALUES IN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION: JAPAN COMPARED TO THE U.S.A.

by Satoshi Ishii and Donald W. Klopf*

(A paper prepared for the World Communication Association's biennial convention, August 3-5, 1987, Norwich, U.K.)

Our communicative behavior is strongly influenced by a complex system of needs, values, beliefs, and attitudes, a system which Klopf (1987) calls our personal orientation system. The system activates and directs our communicative behavior as it helps determine our relationships to the ideas being discussed and to the people discussing them. The system tells us what is good or bad, right or wrong, important or unimportant, and more or less, controls our everyday behavior in society.

The needs, values, beliefs, and attitudes that constitute the system are learned, and learned within the framework of a specific culture. In essence, then, they are culturally imposed, and vary from culture to culture.

Values are the evaluative and judgmental aspect of our personal orientation system. As Krech and Crutchfield (1948) noted, values function as the governing framework for our needs, and guide and direct our behavior. More importantly, like the other parts of the orientation system, values are learned, arising out of the culture. They make known to members of the culture what is important and satisfactory and what is not, specifying for the culture what should be done and what should not be done for that culture. They

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are guidelines that determine proper and improper behavior for the culture. In this sense, values are a determiner of our behavior in communication settings, functioning as criteria for judgment and choice in the course of actions.

Values of one culture are more apt than not to differ from the values another culture follows. This basic assumption makes the study of values essential for intercultural communication scholars and practioners. American business executives working in Tokyo once reported that their first intercultural problem was the difficulty of understanding Japanese values (Mainichi Daily News, 1977). Samovar, Porter, and Jain (1981) maintain, "The values held by participants in intercultural communication are important because values develop standards and guidelines that establish appropriate and inappropriate behavior in a society."

In this paper, we examine the values of two disparate cultures, Japan and the United States of America, in an attempt to discover how different the values of one culture are from those of the other. In our examination, we first discuss briefly the nature of values including their classes and types. Then, we review research of Japanese and American values for comparison purposes, reporting the results of our recent study of values in the two cultures.

THE NATURE OF VALUES

As we have mentioned, values are the evaluative and judgmental aspect of our individual orientation system. In other words, according to the description of Brislin, Cushner, Cherry, and young (1986), values are the weights with which people evaluate or judge the world. For Rokeach (1973), values serve as standards or criteria to guide not only our actions but also our judgments,

choices, attitudes, evaluations, arguments, exhortations, rationalizations, and attributions of causality. Along the same line, DeVito (1978) observes that values are those objects or ideas that we regard as positive or negative, valuable or worthless, moral or immoral, and so forth, and that those objects and ideas influence our judgments and decisions.

Once we have decided to take some sort of action, our values come into play. They cause us to determine whether the action we contemplate is good or bad, right or wrong, and important or unimportant. Values help us to decide whether what we need to do will be useful, pleasure-producing, aesthetically sound, moral, good or just. Values, thus, provide directions to our actions.

A particular value for one individual can differ over time or in differing situations in terms of salience, direction, and degree. The same holds true for the members of one culture as well as many cultures. The point is that what one culture may consider importnat and good, other cultures may not.

SALIENCE. The perceived importance of values, or salience, can fall into one of four classes (Sitaram and Cogdell, 1976). They can be either primary, secondary, tertiary or of no value.

Primary values are the most important to an individual or culture and are worth guarding at all costs. Most Americans believe that democracy should be preserved at all costs, and they have fought in the past to protect that value. To them, democracy is a primary value. However, it is not so important elsewhere in the world. Japanese university students, for example, do not value democracy as high as do their American counterparts, as we will see later. They consider it secondary in importance, in

other words, significant but not worth dying for. In a few countries, democracy holds only tertiary salience--good to have but not worth bothering about. The people are content and happy to live under totalitarian regimes in those countries. A country or two see no value whatsoever in democracy (Klopf, 1987).

DIRECTION. Values are either positive, negative or neutral (no direction). For Americans, sexual equality is positive; inequality is negative. For many people, their religion is positive, regardless of what the religion is--Buddhist, Shinto, Protestant, Catholic, Jewish or Muslim. For many of these same people, someone else's religion, if it is different from theirs, is negative, and, in some cases will stir up hatreds and hostility in them. To other people, religion is neutral and they do not consider it either as positive or negative.

DEGREE. Degree refers to the intensity or strength of a value. A value can be held with great intensity or to any degree to zero intensity--no strength at all. Intensity is often viewed as being a continuum of degrees, from zero to infinity. Various individuals holding the same salience for a value may differ as to its intensity. Dolin (1986) compared the values of old and young Americans, and found that they differ between the two groups but the values differed in degree more than in terms of salience or direction, suggesting that both old and young thought the same values were important but not to the same degree.

TYPES OF VALUE. A complex of values exists in every culture, some of which are universal and common to all cultures. Rokeach (1973) found thirty-six universal values. Eighteen of these he considered terminal because he saw these values as being the personal and social ones related to life's ultimate aims. The other eighteen

he called instrumental because they represent desirable modes of behavior. Stewart (1972) lists thirty American values and divides them into four groups: (1) values linking the individual to concrete events in the world; (2) values related to social relations; (3) values related to man and nature; and (4) values related to the individual. Sitaram and Cogdell (1976) studied values across cultures and determined twenty-nine have universal meaning. Sugino (1973) determined that seven values affected Japanese communication practices, and she compared the seven with eleven American values which she felt had an impact on American communication style. In the present study, we utilized a value scale identifying forty-two values, and these form the basis for the research reported next.

VALUES COMPARED: JAPAN AND THE U.S.A.

In addition to the Sitaram and Cogdell (1976) and Sugino (1973) research into values across cultures just mentioned, scholars have investigated values on a cross-cultural basis. Golis (1978) compared Americans with natives of the Philippines as did Stewart (1972). The Tokei Suri Kenkyusho (Institute of Statistical Mathematics, 1982) has conducted every five years large-scale systematic comparative studies of values among Japanese, Japanese Americans, and middle-class white Americans. Gordon and Kikuchi (1975) and Kikuchi (1980), using the cross-cultural survey method that they had developed, compared and analyzed interpersonal values among several different societies. Ishii (1986) conducted a comparative study of the Japanese interpersonal values of giri (social duty/obligation) and ninjo ("natural" human feelings) among university students in Japan, Hawaii, and Guam. We can conclude, therefore, that cross-cultural value comparisons are an area of academic

interest, particularly among Japanese and American researchers.

METHOD. To compare the values of Japanese and American university students, the study reported here, based on a scale patterned after that of Rokeach (1973) including his items and those of Sitaram and Cogdell (1976), was administered to 230 Nihon and Otsuma Women's University students in Japan and a similar number of West Virginia University students in the U.S.A, in the fall semester, 1986. A Chi-square test was done for significance.

RESULTS. The respondents chose one of the four alternatives corressponding to the salience of each value in their life. They selected either primary, secondary, tertiary, or of no value. The results of their selections are shown in Table 1 (page 7) by percents.

The Chi-square analysis reveals significant differences between the Japanese and American respondents on the following values in terms of primary salience. The American respondents consider these values as primary with the difference between them and the Japanese significant: independence, individuality, human dignity, democracy, and loyalty. The Japanese value only peace as primary and the difference between the Japanese respondents and the Americans is significant. Thus, the Japanese would die, if necessary, only for peace, while the Americans would guard at all costs their independence, individuality, human dignity, democracy, and loyalty, according to the survey results.

Some of the secondary values, those considered important but not important enough to die for, are noteworthy. The Japanese place in this salience category, that is, for a majority of the Japanese, these values: independence, individuality, hospitality, democracy,

(Percentages are rounded to full percents.)

VALUE	PRIMARY		SECONDARY		TERTIARY		NO VALUE	
	J	USA	J	USA	J	USA	J	USA
1 Independence	21%	83%	67%	15%	12%	2%	0%	0%
2 Individuality	35%	68%	56%	28%	9%	4%	0%	0%
3 Human dignity	56%	78%	37%	18%	7%	4%	0%	0%
4 Hospitality	9%	28%	62%	63%	29%	9%	0%	0%
5 Skin color	8%	8%	25%	38%	67%	52%	0%	2%
6 Democracy	33%	74%	55%	22%	12%	4%	0%	0%
7 Doing	29%	32%	66%	50%	5%	18%	0%	0%
8 Firstness	8%	24%	50%	63%	42%	13%	0%	0%
9 Aggressiveness	17%	22%	70%	65%	13%	13%	0%	0%
10 Loyalty	13%	80%	57%	17%	30%	3%	0%	0%
11 Inherited property	12%	9%	41%	37%	47%	54%	0%	0%
12 Private property	24%	46%	55%	35%	21%	19%	0%	0%
13 Money	16%	33%	62%	61%	22%	6%	0%	0%
14 Fair play	27%	39%	58%	55%	15%	6%	0%	0%
15 Sexual equality	21%	28%	56%	61%	23%	11%	0%	0%
16 Peace	81%	68%	14%	26%	0%	6%	0%	0%
17 Patriotism	16%	54%	47%	46%	37%	0%	0%	0%
18 Environmental respect	39%	28%	51%	68%	10%	4%	0%	0%
19 Perfectionism	5%	19%	33%	59%	62%	22%	0%	0%
20 Cooperation	36%	30%	58%	61%	6%	9%	0%	0%
21 Competition	7%	26%	48%	59%	45%	15%	0%	0%
22 Respect for elders	10%	52%	66%	46%	24%	2%	0%	0%
23 Religion	3%	59%	18%	22%	79%	17%	0%	2%
24 Sincerity	36%	57%	57%	37%	7%	4%	0%	2%
25 Progress	31%	28%	62%	57%	7%	15%	0%	0%
26 Hierarchical system	3%	9%	12%	26%	85%	57%	0%	8%
27 Need to to be liked	24%	35%	61%	59%	15%	6%	0%	0%
28 Equality	50%	44%	44%	50%	6%	6%	0%	0%
29 Frankness	26%	22%	60%	50%	14%	28%	0%	0%
30 Modesty	6%	15%	53%	54%	41%	31%	0%	0%
31 Education	22%	50%	68%	50%	10%	0%	0%	0%
32 Motherhood	19%	45%	58%	32%	23%	11%	0%	0%
33 Saviorism	3%	28%	23%	39%	75%	26%	0%	6%
34 Materialism	3%	9%	33%	61%	64%	28%	0%	2%
35 Punctuality	24%	28%	64%	61%	12%	11%	0%	0%
36 Efficiency	12%	37%	68%	57%	20%	6%	0%	0%
37 Authoritarianism	1%	6%	17%	37%	82%	54%	0%	2%
38 Obligation	17%	39%	66%	50%	17%	9%	0%	2%
39 Fare land	2%	2%	30%	15%	68%	26%	0%	57%
40 Self-reliance	10%	57%	56%	35%	34%	8%	0%	0%
41 Informality	2%	19%	36%	64%	62%	17%	0%	0%
42 Dependency	2%	6%	36%	46%	62%	48%	0%	0%

doing, aggressiveness, loyalty, private property, money, fair play, sexual equality environmental respect, cooperation, respect for elders, sincerity, progress, need to be liked, frankness, modesty, education, motherhood, puncutality, efficiency, obligation, and self-reliance. A majority of the Americans attach secondary salience to these values: hospitality, firstness, aggressiveness, money, fair play, sexual equality, environmental respect, perfectionism, cooperation, competition, progress, need to be liked, modesty, materialism, puncutlaity, efficiency, and informality.

Tertiary values worth noting for the Japanese are skin color, perfectionism, religion, hierarchical system, saviorism, authoritarianism, materialism, farm land, informality, and dependency. Only a few of the values are considered tertiary by the majority of the Americans: skin color, inherited property, hierarchical system, and authoritarianism. Farm land holds no value for the American majority.

DISCUSSION. Essential to comprehending the implications of the results is the realization that the results represent a segment of the Japanese and American populations not necessarily indicative of the whole population in either case. The survey respondents are university students, many of whom are away from parental supervision for the first time, and they are seeking independent existence. The results should, therefore, be accepted with reservation and in consideration of the survey conditions.

The fact that the sample for the study comes from a student population may account in part for the emphasis on values related to personal freedom (independence, individuality, human dignity, democracy, self-reliance) for both Japanese and Americans, although the Americans give these values more strength than the Japanese.

University students, away from parental fetters, usually embrace freedom but are unaware of its costs.

Nonetheless, our study clearly endorses the contentions by Sugino (1973) and other researchers that the Japanese and American cultures share few similar values. The data in Table 1 obviously demonstrate the lack of similar values. Among the primary values, only peace attracts a majority of both groups. Among the secondary values, hospitality, aggressiveness, money, fair play, sexual equality, cooperation, progress, need to be liked, punctuality, and efficiency can be said to attract an obvious majority--10 out of 42 values.

Sugino (1973) argues that the differences between the Japanese and Americans is partially attributable to religious, moral or philosophical backgrounds--what some say constitutes a part of a culture's world view (Klopf, 1987). The Japanese are heavily influenced by Buddhism and Confucianism which emphasize the importance of confomity and compromise in the social order. The Americans, on the other hand, derive their values from Puritan and pioneer morality. American society is based on Christianity and the frontier spirit. Parenthetically, we should be reminded that Japanese society is monoethnic with a limited number of foreign immigrants and residents while American society is a pluralistic one, obtaining its strength and character from a wide range of religions, moral precepts, and philosophies, representing a multitude of cultures. Consequently, it is difficult to generalize about American morality and values. Nevertheless, our study and explanation for the obvious value differences carry credibility and seem worthy. What is important is the fact that the two cultures represent such dissimilarities in values.

A point which our study raises merits contemplation. It evidently implies that when a Japanese communicates with Americans, or other cultural groups, for that matter, possessing a different value system, the Japanese may experience profound communication difficulties. The reverse case may also hold true; when an American or a person from any other culture with a different value system communicates with Japanese, he or she may experience frustration and irritation because of value differences. The dissimilar quality of the value systems may even result in intercultural communication breakdowns, as represented by the difficulty of business talks and negotiations of trade friction. It is vital, therefore, to study the value systems of our own culture as well as those of the other's in order to establish and develop communication across cultures.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In summary of the value aspect of our personal orientation system, values are the evaluative and judgmental facet of that system, helping us determine what is right or wrong, good or bad, and important or unimportant. What is right or wrong for us, however, may not be so for the people of another culture as this study vividly demonstrated. Cultures differ widely in terms of value salience. What is primary for one culture may be only of secondary or tertiary importance for another. In terms of directions, values are positive, negative or neutral. Values also function according to their degrees, from zero to infinity.

To compare and analyze values in Japanese and American society, our survey was administered to Nihon and Otsuma Women's University students and West Virginia University students as respondents. The

study results revealed varieties of significant cross-cultural differences between the two groups of respondents. The most salient difference was that the Japanese chose only peace as a primary value while their American counterparts considered independence, individuality, human dignity, democracy, and loyalty as primary.

Sitaram and Haapanen (1979) offer excellent advice in this regard, stressing that each participant in an intercultural interaction should make efforts to understand the other's values. That understanding should precede any attempt to communicate across cultural differences.

The two intercultural communication scholars also advocate that each intercultural communicator should adapt his or her communication style to the other's values. Adaptation implies respect for the other's values, and such adaptation should be on-going and constant. "Thus," state Gudykunst and Kim (1984),"the process of becoming intercultural necessitates openness to the dynamics of change and possession of attitudes that are less criticizing, less prejudging, less selecting, and less rejecting of other peoples and cultures."

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